THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Development and promotion of tourist centres is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. The Central Department of Tourism has been and will continue to extend financial assistance within their available resources for development of tourism infrastructure in the State and would continue to promote and publicise different destinations of Rajasthan in key international markets as well as within the country. As the 8th Five Year Plan has not yet been finalised, it is not possible to indicate any financial implications or give other details.

Expanision programmes of Air India

*299. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 15 given in the Rajya Sabha on 25th February, 1992 and state:

(a) what expenditure is likely to be incurred by Air India on its expansion programme; and

(b) what is the extent to which Air India would meet the challenges thrown up by other international open-sky competitors?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) It is difficult to quantify the expenditure to be incurred by Air India on its fleet expansion programme in future. In regard to restructuring of air corporations, the expenditure would relate to preliminary expenses regarding incorporation of companies.

(b) While Air India would certainly have to improve its competitive edge, the traffic entitlements continue to be regulated by the bilateral air services agreements as envisaged in the Chicago Convention, 1944.

Operation of courier service in the country

*300. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of courier services that have been allowed to operate in the country to carry mails/ postal cargos to cater to both domestic and international mails;

(b) whether there has been a mushroom growth of courier services with increasing number of public frauds;

(c) whether the business of Department of Posts including the E.M.S. Speed Post Service has been adversely affected by such unwarranted growth of private courier services;

(d) whether normal daks are delayed abnormally thereby defeating the purpose of the Department of Posts;

(e) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(f) what steps are being proposed to be taken to improve the efficiency of Government's Speed Post Services, opening of counters for round the clock booking facilities, deliveries on holidays, etc. in metropolitan cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) No Sir, there is no provision under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 to license any Courier service in the country to carry mail. Exclusive privilege of receiving, collecting, sending, dispatching and delivering letters vests in the Central Government under the Act.

(b) There is no information on this with the Department of Posts.

(c) Operations of private courier services results in some loss of revenue to the Department of Posts. The Department is however making efforts to increase the business of EMS Speed Post which has shown substantial growth in the last few years.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) In view of (d) above, does not arise.

(f) Monthly monitoring of Speed Post